

III. REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 4, 9, 14, 16, 20, and 30 have been amended and Claims 2, 26-29, and 31 have been cancelled. Accordingly, after entering this amendment, claims 1, 3-25, 30, and 32-33 remain pending in the application.

Objections to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because the first sheet contains different figures unrelated to the previous figures, and because of informalities in other of the figures. The Applicants assert that there was no need to change the first sheet of drawings, including Figures 1, 2, and 3, and that the Examiner has correctly refused to enter the changed first sheet. Only the second sheet, including Figures 4, 5, and 10, requires correction. The Applicants have included a replacement sheet including amended Figures 4, 5, and 10, as well as an annotated sheet illustrating the amendments that were made. The Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter the corrected sheet of drawings, and withdraw these objections to the drawings.

The amendments that were made to the drawings necessitated minor changes to the specification. An amendment to the specification is shown above. No new matter was added in amending the specification.

Claim Objections

Claims 1, 16, and 30 have been objected to by the Examiner for informalities. Accordingly, the Applicants have amended claims 1, 16, and 30 according to the

Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these objections to the claims.

Rejections Under 35 USC §102(b)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 9-18, 20-23, 25, and 30-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. RE34612 to Walter Bender et al. ("Bender").

A telephone interview was conducted between David W. Okey and Examiner Ernesto Garcia on January 22, 2004, during which, the Bender reference was discussed. During the interview, the Examiner explained that Bender showed a twist between two straight portions in Figure 4. Mr. Okey understood this observation. Mr. Okey then argued that Bender did not include the limitation of a portion of the twist from about 10 minutes to about 1 degree. The Examiner explained that the term "about" allowed flexibility thus to include angles greater than 1 degree. The Examiner suggested that the claims be amended to remove the term "about" as Bender shows a twist of 90 degrees.

Accordingly, the Applicants have amended claims 9, 14, 20, and 30 such that the twist is from $0^{\circ} 10'$ to 1° , as suggested by the Examiner. The Applicants assert that Bender does not include a twist "from $0^{\circ} 10'$ to 1° " and therefore assert that claims 9, 14, 20, and 30 are allowable over Bender. Further, Applicants assert that claims 10-13, 15-19, 21-25, and 32-33 are allowable as depending, either directly or indirectly, from allowable independent claims 9, 14, 20, and 30 respectively. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Rejections Under 35 USC §103(a) – Part One

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-3 and 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over German patent 3,511,813 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,533,235 to Anthony Dymerski et al. ("Dymerski"). The rejection states that the German patent discloses all the limitations of Claim 1 except for the at least one concave or convex surface. The rejection also states that Dymerski discloses the concave or convex surface, citing polygonal length 200 in Dymerski.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependant claim 2. Claim 1 has further been amended such that the twist is "from 0° 10' to 1°". The Applicants assert that the German patent and Dymerski do not disclose or describe this limitation of amended Claim 1. The term "about" has been removed from the language of claim 2 such that the range of twist is from 0° 10' to 1°. The Applicants assert that the German patent and Dymerski do not disclose a twist that is limited as such, and therefore, that claim 1 as amended is patentable over the German patent and Dymerski. The Applicants further assert that claims 3 and 5-8 are patentable as depending, either directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 1. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Rejections Under 35 USC §103(a) – Part Two

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 4, 19 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. RE34612 to Walter Bender et al. ("Bender") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,533,235 to Anthony Dymerski et al.

("Dymerski"). The rejection states that Bender discloses all of the elements of the inventions claimed in Claims 1, 4, 19 and 24, except for having at least one concave or convex surface, and that Dymerski discloses a concave surface.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependant claim 2. Claim 1 has further been amended such that the twist is "from 0° 10' to 1°". The Applicants assert that Bender and Dymerski do not disclose or describe this limitation of amended Claim 1. The term "about" has been removed from the language of claim 2 such that the range of twist is from 0° 10' to 1°. The Applicants assert that Bender and Dymerski do not disclose a twist that is limited as such, and therefore, that claim 1 as amended is patentable over the German patent and Dymerski. The Applicants further assert that claim 4 is patentable as depending, either directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 1.

In light of the arguments made above, the Applicants assert that independent claims 14 and 20 are allowable. Therefore, the Applicants assert that dependant claims 19 and 24 are allowable as depending, either directly or indirectly, from allowable independent claims 14 and 20 respectively.

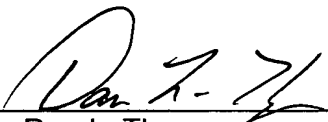
Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Conclusion

The Applicants assert that pending Claims 1, 3-25, 30, and 32-33 as amended are patentable. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner grant early allowance of these claims. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorneys for the Applicants via telephone if such communication would expedite this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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